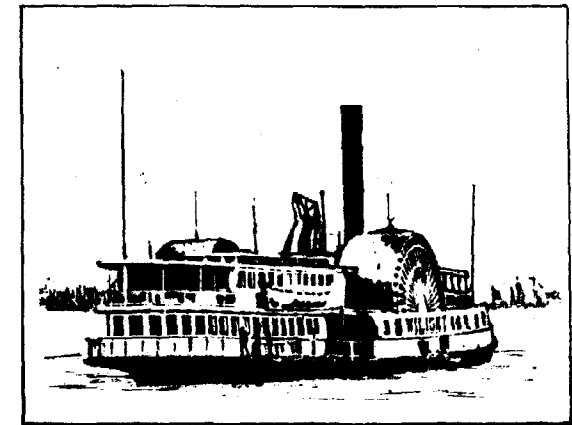
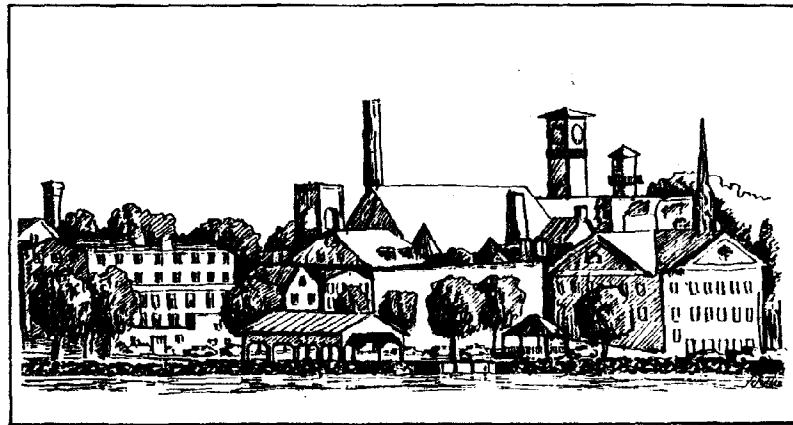
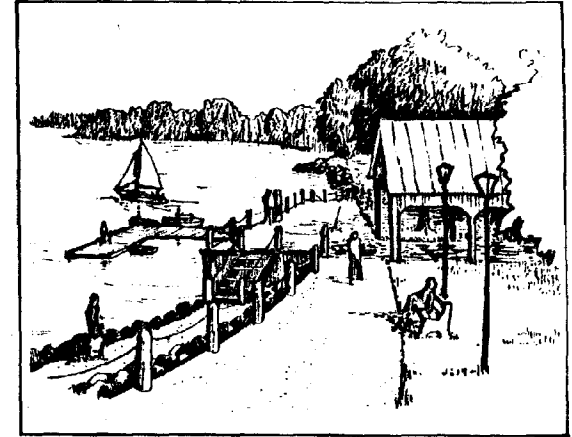


Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Mgmt Program

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Center

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THE BRISTOL - DELAWARE RIVER STRATEGY: Actions for Riverfront Revitalization

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Prepared by:
National Park Service
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
Division of Park and Resource Planning

December 1985

In cooperation with:
Bristol Borough Council
The Grundy Foundation
Pennsylvania Division of
Coastal Zone Management

THE BRISTOL - DELAWARE RIVER STRATEGY:
Actions for Riverfront Revitalization

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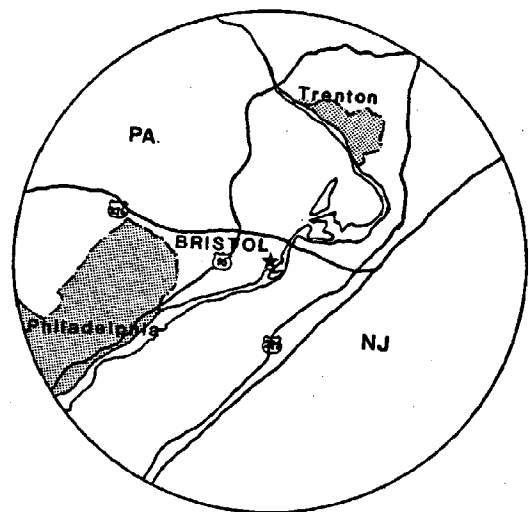
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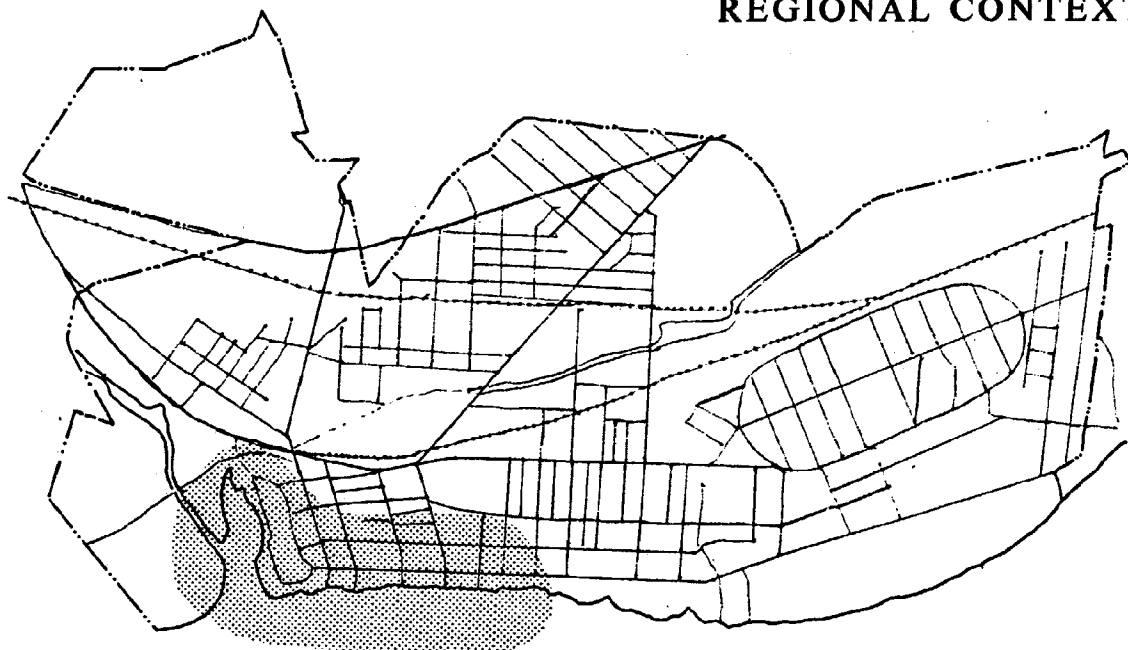
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Lion's Club
Mill Street Business Association
Radcliffe Cultural and Historical Foundation



REGIONAL CONTEXT



Study Site

BRISTOL BOROUGH



INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

This report summarizes the work of the National Park Service in Bristol and highlights the many revitalization opportunities that have been identified in the borough. By gaining an understanding of the resources of the area and the issues affecting those resources, and by listening to the community's organizations and leaders, the National Park Service study team developed a riverfront revitalization strategy. This strategy focuses on borough-wide opportunities through an action agenda and a concept plan, both of which incorporate ideas and recommended actions.

The Borough of Bristol, situated on the western bank of the Delaware River in Pennsylvania, has been the focus of many revitalization efforts during the past year. These initiatives are in turn the result of years of effort by many individuals and groups within the community. In 1984 Congressman Peter Kostmayer organized a trip for community leaders to Lowell, Massachusetts, a city which has capitalized on state and federal programs to preserve its historic resources and to revitalize its economy.

Congressman Kostmayer requested the National Park Service to assist in the formulation of a strategy for the conservation and revitalization of the borough's riverfront area. The Park Service was asked to work with the Borough Council and the community to develop a coordinated strategy for the enhancement of Bristol's natural, cultural, economic, and recreational values.

Assistance to the borough is provided under Section 11(a) of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, (P.L. 90-542 as amended) which authorizes the National Park Service to assist local, state and federal government agencies and private groups in the preparation of river conservation plans. The National Park Service's Division of Park and Resource Planning within the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office provides technical assistance to state and local governments in 13 Northeastern states, under its State and Local River Conservation Assistance Program.

The National Park Service entered into a cooperative agreement with the Borough of

Bristol, the Division of Coastal Zone Management of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, and the Grundy Foundation. The agreement focused on the coordination of the efforts of many separate organizations to foster borough revitalization. The Division of Coastal Zone Management has simultaneously worked with the borough to update its Comprehensive Plan and ordinances. The Grundy Foundation has been equally active in sponsoring projects throughout the borough.

The study area includes Bristol's riverfront area from the Otter Creek Marsh to the Grundy Library, including the historic district of Radcliffe Street, as well as the business district of Mill and Market Streets (see map).

This report offers recommendations which address the borough's revitalization goals through coordinated, practical actions, to be undertaken by various interests, including citizens, local businesses, community groups, the Borough Council, and private organizations and foundations.

STUDY PROCESS

Project Organization & Information

Congressional request
Project proposal
Project cooperators:
- Borough Council
- PA Div. of Coastal Zone
Management
- Grundy Foundation

Issue identification report
Mailing list

Newsletter
Waterfront survey
M.O.U.
Slide show

Advisory Committee
established
Goals
"Wish list"
Newsletter

"Wish list" priorities
Action Agenda
Concept Plan
Recommendations
Program Review
Newsletter

Draft strategy report
Concept map
Concept graphics

Grant applications
Design assistance
Committee formation

Process Step

STUDY ORGANIZATION

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

OPPORTUNITY INVENTORY

COORDINATION

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

REVIEW

IMPLEMENTATION

Public Involvement

Meetings with
community leaders
Meeting with
organizations
& Borough Council

Issue workshop
Public meetings

Public meeting

Revitalization
workshop

Advisory Committee
Meetings with action
committees
Meetings with
community leaders

Advisory Committee
review
Meetings with
community leaders

Advisory Committee
review
Public review
Borough Council review
and endorsement

Advisory Committee
review
Borough Council review

PROCESS

The purpose of National Park Service involvement in Bristol has been to provide technical assistance to the Borough in the development of a strategy for the conservation and revitalization of the community's riverfront area. The objectives of this project have been:

1. To work with the Bristol Borough Council to encourage support of specific projects to help conserve and enhance community resources, and to help revitalize Borough-wide economic activity.
2. To work with the community of Bristol to increase its awareness of its natural, recreational and cultural resources, and to help develop a constituency for riverfront revitalization.
3. To coordinate local, state, federal and private efforts to initiate and carry out specific actions.

4. To focus the awareness of the community on its resources through a specific river-related project.

The study process involved a series of tasks which were undertaken by the project team. While each task was important, the value of an individual task was the greatest when considered as a building block in the study process. Combining all the information led to the development of the strategy and recommendations. The following tasks were performed as part of the study:

Organization

The project team held a series of preliminary meetings with groups and individuals actively working in Bristol in order to identify issues confronting the community and potential

actions to be taken to resolve them. The Pennsylvania Division of Coastal Zone Management, the Borough Council and the Grundy Foundation agreed to participate in the development of the project and to provide information to the study team as needed.

Issue Identification

Issues can be defined as matters of public concern. The problems of Bristol, in light of the revitalization effort, were identified, through formal and informal meetings and through review of prior reports and studies. The result was a long list of problems and concerns requiring attention, and a "wish list" of suggested actions. The project team used these issues as focal points for further investigation. Most of these issues centered on the use or misuse of the borough's resources.

Inventory of Opportunities

Issues and problems can be viewed from another angle as opportunities. Each resource, whether natural, cultural, economic or recreational, offers opportunities for its future development. Sites where such opportunities were evident were outlined and presented by means of a slide show at a public meeting in March 1985. At this time it was felt advisable to narrow the focus of National Park Service involvement to the riverfront area in order to concentrate on achievable actions which would be a stimulus to revitalization throughout the borough.

Coordination

The National Park Service has served as an information broker, coordinator and catalyst throughout the study process. A number of tasks fall into this category:

- o A memorandum of understanding among the four key cooperators was signed to formalize each participant's commitment to the project.
- o A mailing list of about 250 borough contacts was developed for information distribution.

- o Three newsletters were published. They included reports of ongoing borough activities, announcements of meetings and events, and summaries of NPS project findings.
- o A Riverfront Revitalization Workshop was held, featuring guest speakers on successful downtown and waterfront projects, and a design exercise for participants. About 50 borough residents and visitors attended.
- o A project Advisory Committee was formed to

guide the development of the riverfront strategy. It was composed of volunteers, experts and appointed representatives from every ward in the borough and from organizations already active in revitalization efforts.

- o Meetings among Borough Council members, the Mill Street Business Association, The Nature Conservancy, the project Advisory Committee and Burlington's Mayor presented opportunities for information-sharing and coordination.



Strategy Development

The revitalization strategy was developed through a series of tasks performed by the Advisory Committee and the project team. These included:

- o **Goals:** One of the Advisory Committee's initial tasks was to agree upon the following goals:
 1. To enhance the borough image and economy.
 2. To promote community involvement in ongoing revitalization efforts.
 3. To better use the natural, historic and cultural resources of the borough to improve the quality of life.
- o **Action Agenda:** The goals provided a framework for the development of specific actions. The suggestions made in meetings, questionnaires and workshops which preceded this phase were compiled into a "wish list." This list was then prioritized and narrowed into an outline form, indicating who could be responsible for each action and how and when each could be accomplished.

- o **Concept Plan:** The actions were spatially arranged on a map of the waterfront to illustrate the scope and relationships of the recommendations.
- o **Strategy:** The Action Agenda and Concept Plan were expanded into a more detailed explanation of possible actions.
- o **Recommendations:** High priority actions were specified for responsible organizations.
- o **Program Review:** A number of important potential sources of funding and assistance were identified and documented. Program applications are being prepared for several projects.

The elements of the strategy and action agenda have been designed so that they can be carried out individually or in concert with other elements. Some actions are already being implemented by the groups and individuals who assisted in their development. Other actions await further development, coordination and assistance.

OPPORTUNITIES

The first step in developing a revitalization strategy is to identify the opportunities presented by a given area. These opportunities can include the area's location and surroundings, its natural resources, the type and condition of its buildings, its transportation system and the interest of its residents in a revitalization effort.

The following list, developed through research, interviews, and meetings within the community, identifies some of Bristol's primary areas of opportunity. It does not constitute recommendations for action (which are presented in Section 7 of this report, and are focused on the waterfront area) but rather considers Bristol's resources in terms of their potential for revitalization.

Location

The Borough of Bristol is surrounded by a complicated network of highways and railroad lines, which makes commuting to Philadelphia a relatively easy task, but which can also confuse or deter the casual visitor. Bristol's location along the Delaware River has always fostered waterborne commerce



and river recreation. Moreover, the location of a portion of the Borough within the coastal zone has made it eligible to receive federal funds through Pennsylvania's Coastal Zone Management Program. The borough is currently using CZM funding to update its Comprehensive Plan.

Gateways

Parcels of vacant land are found at several key road intersections along the landward edge of the Borough. Presently these sites are cluttered with unattractive

billboards, but could be designed and developed to attract, welcome, and present a positive community image to visitors.

Otter Creek Marsh

The marsh has been identified by The Nature Conservancy as a rare example of a freshwater tidal wetland of ecological significance to Pennsylvania. It offers opportunities to educate the public on the importance of wetlands to the river ecosystem, and could also provide recreational activities such as hiking and birdwatching.

Delaware River

Bristol's location along the Delaware River brought it waterborne commerce in the past, and has great potential for increased recreational use at present. An outstanding feature of the waterfront is its close proximity to some of the Borough's other resources such as the stately homes of the Radcliffe Street historic district and the Mill Street business district.

Burlington Island

The view of this undeveloped island from Bristol's waterfront provides the observer with a pleasing backdrop to the river. Many borough residents remember swimming or boating to the island in the past. Bristol could explore the possibilities of working with Burlington to develop the island for recreation.

Lion's Park

Recreation on the waterfront is already fostered by the presence of Lion's Park. Borough residents use this area for sitting, strolling and picnicking. The highlight of the summer is the Lion's Club concert series. This site has the potential

for expansion both in land area and in activities, and could provide another link between various natural areas along the waterfront.

Delaware Canal

Canals have been a focal point for the revitalization of many cities. The canal is both a state park and an historic resource which serves to link Bristol with its past, and with the other communities along it. Although partially filled in, the canal right-of-way could still be used as part of a trail system linking the waterfront with the existing towpath. Bristol could attempt to work in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks to create such a system.

Bristol Theater

A potential cultural opportunity is presented by the theater on Radcliffe Street. This facility could become a regional center providing not only theater, but films, concerts, and community activities. The theater could be redesigned to provide a balcony or terrace facing the waterfront.



Historic Buildings

Historic resources are by no means confined to Radcliffe Street, but are found throughout the borough. The Borough Council and its Historic Certification Committee have initiated a survey of three potential historic districts for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Placement of these districts on the National Register would offer residents the chance to use federal income tax credits for building renovation and reuse.

Carpet Mill

This building is one of the borough's most noteworthy historic structures, with great potential for adaptive reuse as housing. The Grundy Foundation has been seeking a private developer to renovate the Carpet Mill.

Grundy Mill and Clock

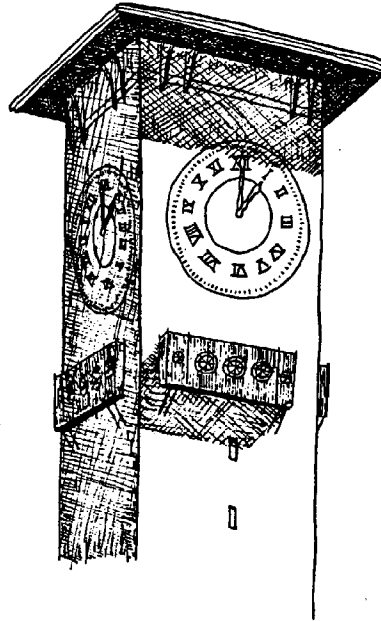
The Grundy clock is for many people a symbol of Bristol and its most easily identifiable feature. The improvement of this structure could symbolize Bristol's heritage for residents and visitors.

Railroad Spur

The removal of the Conrail spur line could open up acres for commercial, residential or recreational development. These new land areas in turn could provide the Borough with new possibilities for housing and employment.

Golf Ranch

The Golf Ranch property also provides the opportunity for creative development due to its location at one of the landward entrances to the Borough. Current plans to develop a shopping center on the property could also result in much-needed highway improvements.

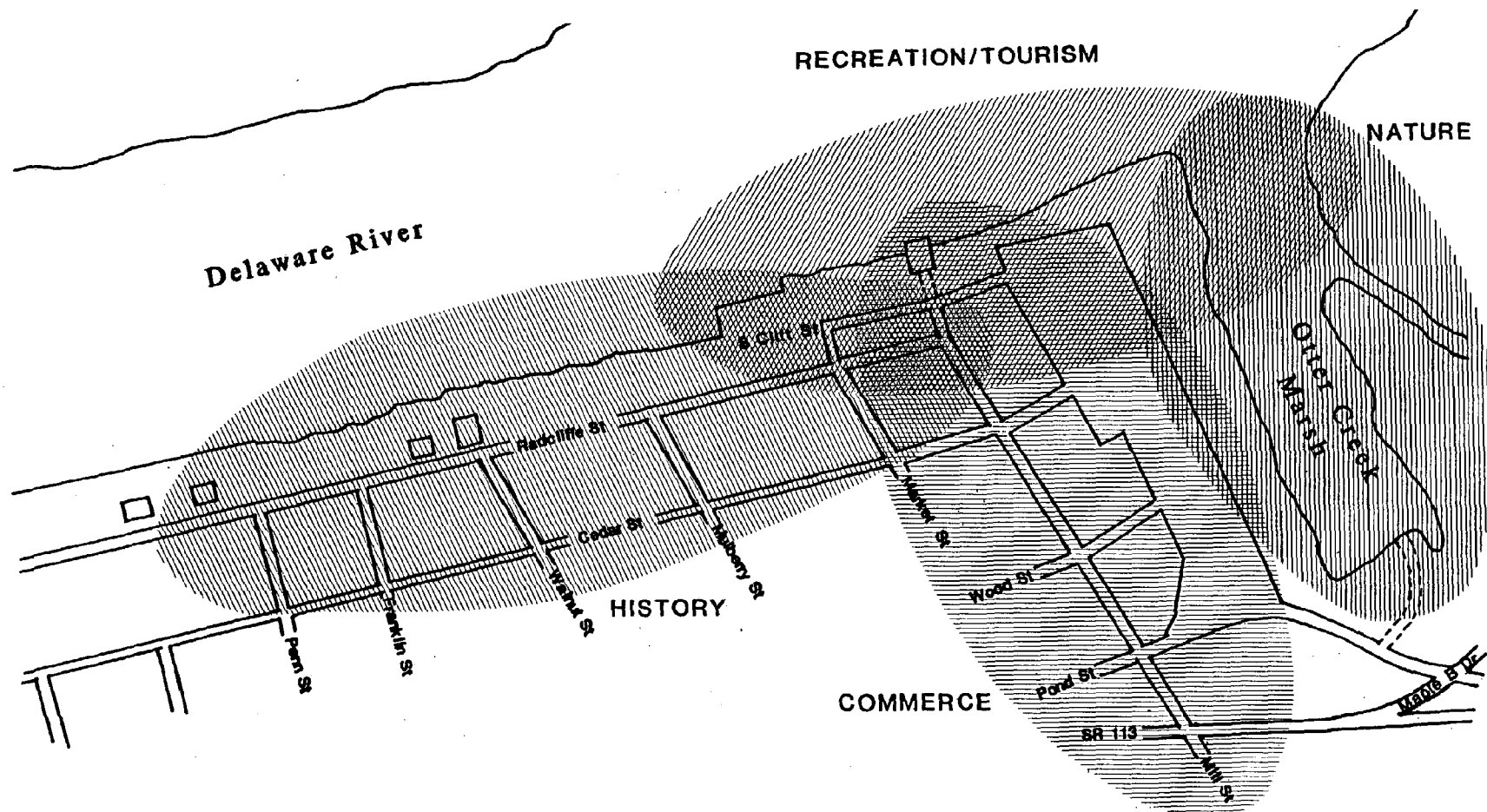
**Zinc Works/Purex Industrial Complex**

This industrial complex along Bristol's northern waterfront is presently underused and offers the potential for enhanced industrial development. Future redevelopment could also include a mix of residential, commercial and recreational land uses, if adequately screened from the industrial uses.

Mill Street Business District

This area represents a concentration of commercial activity within the Borough. A unique opportunity is presented by its close proximity to the waterfront and the existing historic district. Many towns have capitalized on just such a relationship in developing their revitalization strategies.

The above list presents a set of borough-wide opportunities. This planning effort has focused on the opportunities of one specific area, namely the Bristol waterfront. This fact does not diminish the importance of the other community resources or their potential linkage with the waterfront. Borough residents are urged to pursue actions in these other areas.

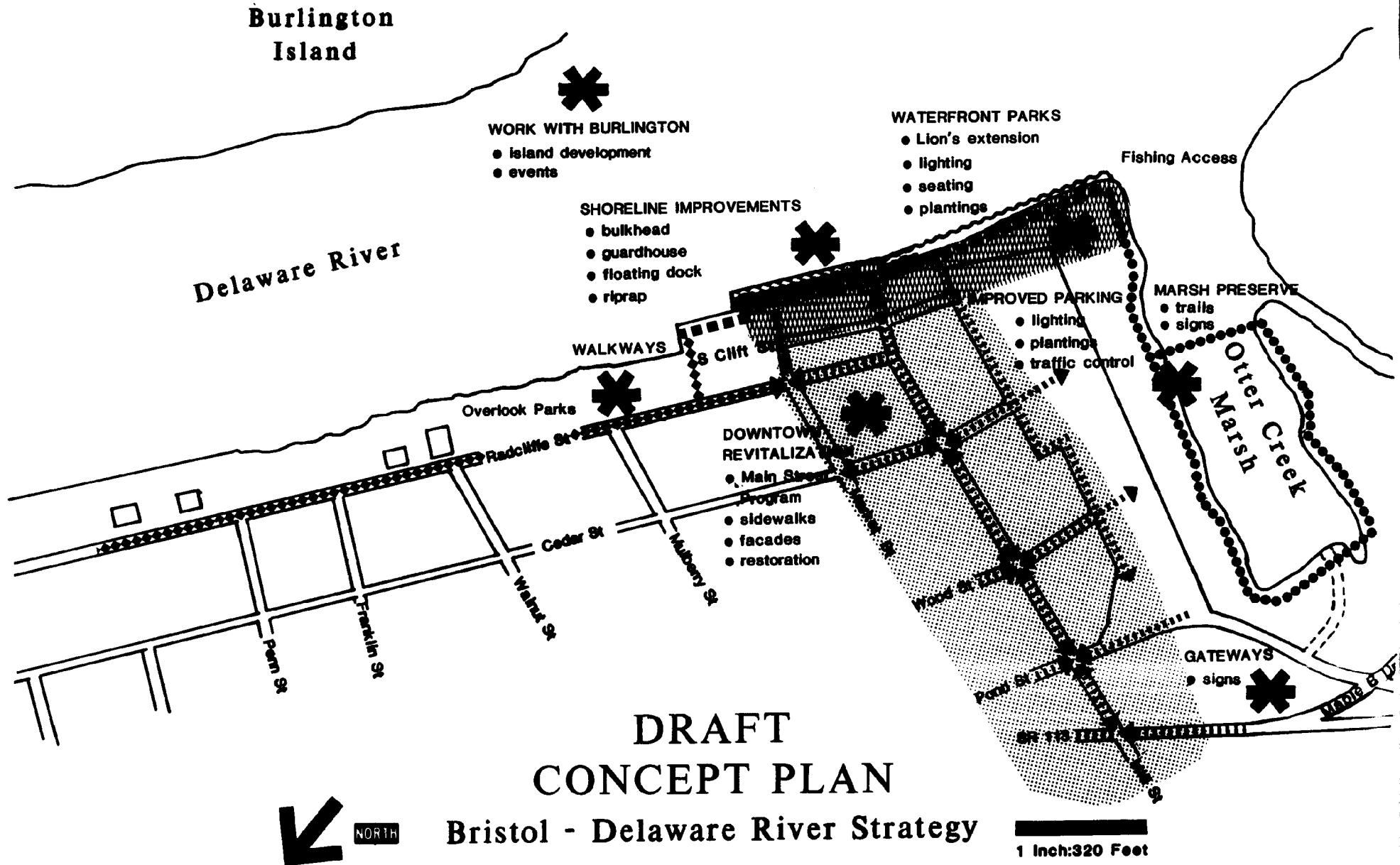


SITE ANALYSIS: Convergence of Resources

The focus of the NPS effort has been Bristol's waterfront and adjacent areas, as shown above. This simple site analysis illustrates the convergence of natural,

economic, historical and recreational resources at the waterfront. Each resource, of course, extends far beyond the rough areas shown here, and is found in many parts of the borough.

The diagram is intended to illustrate the diversity and interdependence of these resources that gives Bristol's waterfront its unique attractiveness.



LEGEND



Major Component



Commercial District



Bulkheading



Historic Walkway



Waterfront Walkway



Waterfront Park Area



Improved Riprap



Business Walkway



Nature Trails

CONCEPT PLAN/ACTION AGENDA

The ideas which have been collected from the community are assembled in the following action agenda and portrayed spatially in the concept plan.

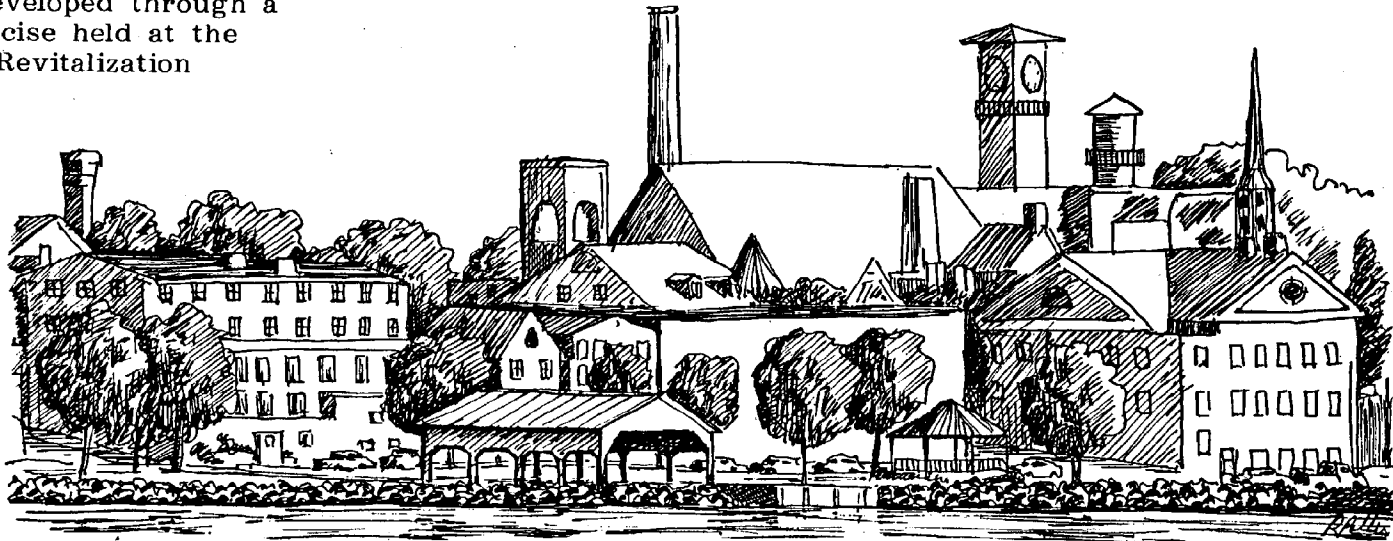
The action agenda is a preliminary identification of responsibilities, strategies and time frames for carrying out the recommended actions. It should be treated as an open-ended document, which can be changed and updated as needed.

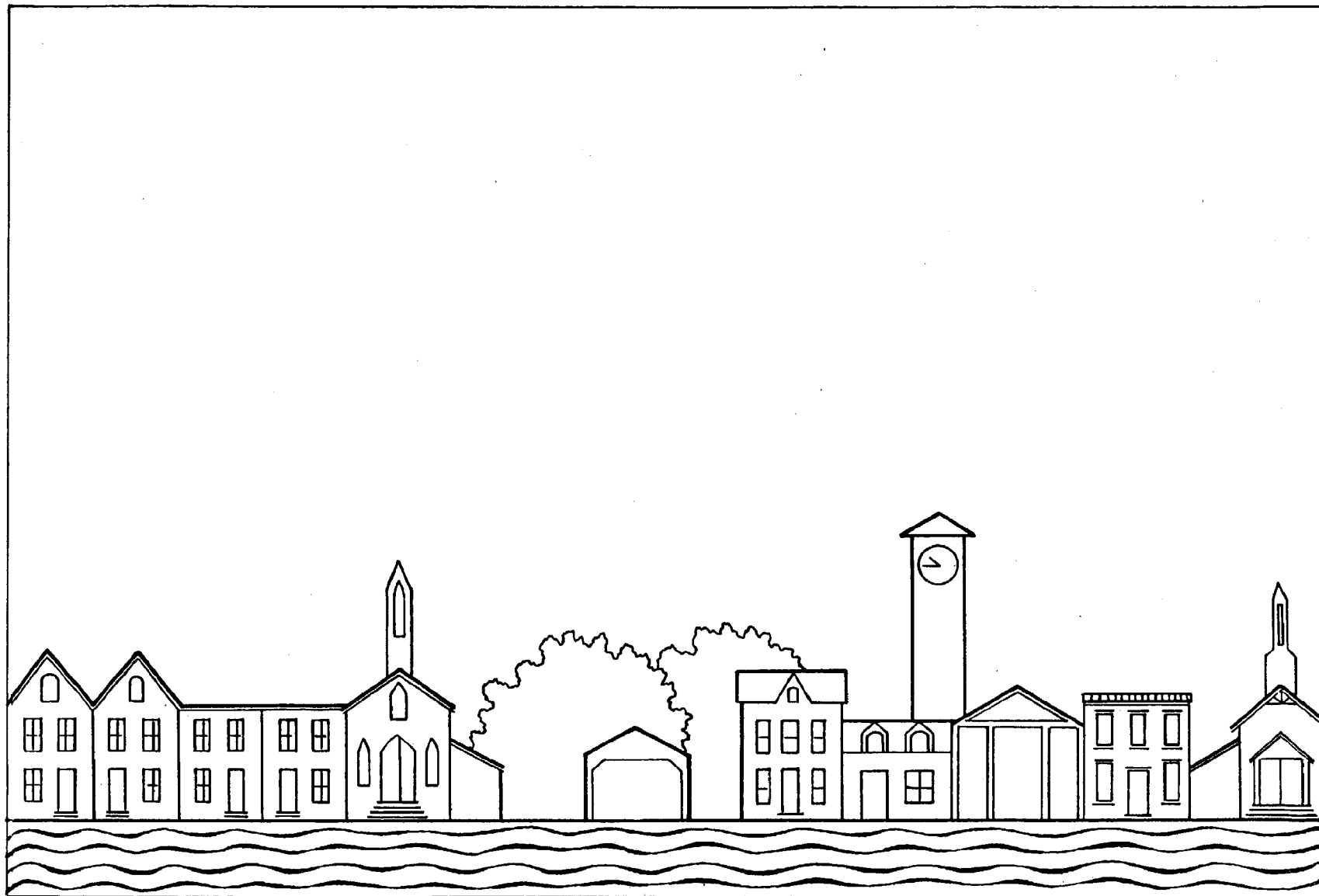
The concept plan is the first step in visualizing how various projects could appear if implemented. This map provides an overview of relationships, sites and movement within the area. The concept plan was developed through a design exercise held at the Riverfront Revitalization

workshop, at which participants produced four alternative maps. These alternatives were refined, condensed into one map, and presented to the advisory committee for review. The map is intended to place ideas relative to one another in space, but not necessarily to assign fixed locations. At this stage the concepts must remain flexible and open to further interpretation and public discussion.

The map is composed of the following: asterisks which denote approximate sites for major revitalization components; arrows showing

movement, activity and relationships; and shaded areas showing importance for economic or recreational enhancement. The sites of major significance are the gateway area, the downtown business district and parking lot, the marsh area, the river shoreline and the historic section. The business district, which is so important to the revitalization effort, has been highlighted. The map shows a convergence of activities at the interface between the commercial section and the waterfront. This area is a hub for economic, recreational and tourist activity, and the central focus of the revitalization effort.





ACTION AGENDA

Action	Who ?	How ?	When ?
GATEWAYS			
Gateways Project	Individuals Businesses Organizations Borough	Fund raising Borough endorsement Determine locations Seek design assistance	Fall '85
Use Water Department shed - Information center - Historic museum - Preserve headquarters	Borough Volunteers Organizations Nature Conservancy	Seek planning assistance Seek design assistance Land and Water Cons. Fund grant, plus private match Fund raising Volunteer help	Summer '86
OTTER CREEK MARSH PRESERVE			
Programs - Signs - Preserve headquarters - Trails - Observation deck	Nature Conservancy Borough Foundation (see GATEWAY above)	L&WCF grant Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management (CZM) grant Volunteer help	Spring '86
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION			
Main St. Program	Borough Main St. Committee/ Coordinator Mill Street Business Association	Adopt elements of Main St. Program: - Organization - Design assistance - Promotion - Economic Enhancement Apply to PA Main St. Program Alternative: Start own program	Spring or Fall '86

Action	Who ?	How ?	When ?
Back of Mill St. - Improve rear entrances - Business walkway - Improve traffic flow - Connect to Waterfront walkway	Businesses Main St. Committee Borough	Private funding PA DCA grants	'86 - '87
Develop theater	Grundy Foundation	Redesign Renovate Link with Lion's Park	Winter '86
Revamp Market St.	Businesses Main St. Committee Borough Property owners	Obtain design assistance Renovation Improve Traffic flow PA DCA grants Private Investment	Summer '86
Restore historic buildings	Property owners Businesses Foundations Organizations	Use Tax Act incentives PA DCA grants Fund raising Main Street Program	Continuous
SHORELINE IMPROVEMENTS Bulkhead project	Borough Foundations Private corporations	Recreational Improvement & Rehabilitation Act (RIRA) grant, CZM grant Matching private funds	Apply: Fall '85 Design: Spring '86 Constr: Summer '86
Improve riprap	(part of Bulkhead project above)		'85 - '86
Floating boat dock	(part of Bulkhead project above)		'85 - '86

Action	Who ?	How ?	When ?
Improve fishing access	Borough Organizations Individuals	Part of RIRA grant application for bulkhead project Consider fishing pier Consider boat dock	Apply: Fall '86
Boat ramp guard house	Borough PA Fish Comm.	Station guard Boat Launching fee Fish Commission improve ramp	Spring '86
WATERFRONT PARK			
Enlarge Lion's Park - Lighting, seating - Plantings - A place for events	Lion's Club Borough	Fund raising Volunteer work Seek design assistance	Summer '86
Extended Park Area - Landscaping - Picnicking - Lighting - Seating - Events	Borough Organizations Foundations	Develop concept Design assistance Apply for L&WCF, CZM grants Fund raising Volunteer work	Fall '86
IMPROVE PARKING AREA			
Plantings Lighting Improve traffic flow	Businesses Individuals Borough	Seek planning, design & engineering assistance PA DCA grant Seek flood control engineering	Fall '86
WALKWAYS			
Waterfront Walkway	Borough	Apply for L&WCF, CZM grants	Apply: Summer '86

Action	Who ?	How ?	When ?
Historic Walkway Business Walkway Nature trails	Businesses Organizations Foundations	RIRA grant Fund raising Seek design assistance Develop walkway signs	
OVERLOOK PARKS Develop parks - Thematic design - Lighting, seating - Develop signs	Borough Businesses Organizations Foundations	Use Borough property at street ends Apply for L&WCF, CZM grants Fund raising Seek design assistance	Apply: Summer '86
LINKAGE TO BURLINGTON Island development/recreation Events	Town of Burlington Borough Businesses Organizations Private investors	Assist Burlington with planning Sponsor joint events Link w/ boat trips Renew historic linkages	Fall '86 - '90
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS: (The following elements should be considered as part of each project.)			
MAINTENANCE Determine maintenance needs of each project - Create Maintenance Committee	Borough Council	Committee could monitor coordinate, identify ongoing maintenance for revitalization projects	Spring '86
Ensure maintenance component for all projects	All project participants	Plan for ongoing funding for maintenance needs of each project	Continuous

Action	Who ?	How ?	When ?
SECURITY			
Improved policing	Borough Council Mayor	Regular police patrols on waterfront	Continuous
Better lighting	Borough Businesses	(See EXTENDED PARK AREA)	
Design elements	Borough Businesses Organizations	Design for public safety and security	Spring '86
PUBLICITY			
Publicity campaign Events	Borough Council Businesses Organizations Politicians	Create Borough Publicity Committee Improved signs Advertising Logo contest Grundy Foundation brochure	Continuous
SIGNS			
Signs as a unifying theme	Borough Businesses Individuals	Apply for grants Seek donations Seek design assistance Logo contest Volunteer help	Spring '86

WATERFRONT STRATEGY

As previously stated, Bristol's waterfront presents a remarkable confluence of natural, historical, economic and recreational resources, and has the potential to become a centerpiece of boroughwide revitalization efforts. At present, parts of the waterfront are used informally for a variety of activities, ranging from boating and fishing to walking, picnicking and sitting, while other parts are unused or neglected. Many Bristol residents avoid the waterfront entirely, feeling that parts of it are unsafe.

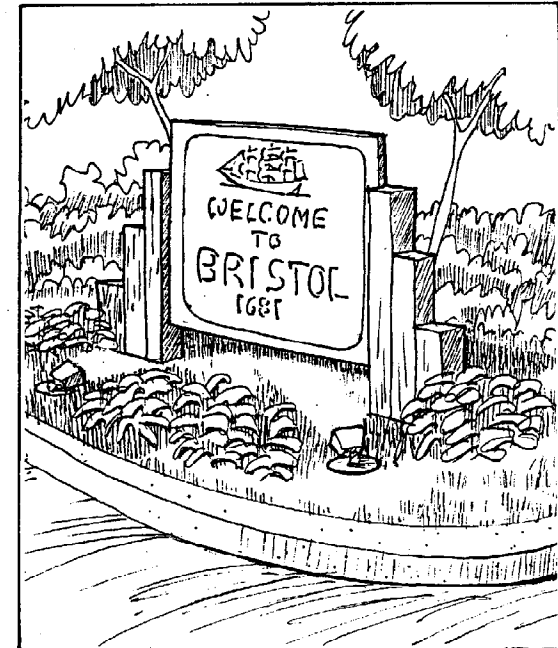
The aim of this strategy is to make the waterfront a central hub of activity for both borough residents and visitors, and to enhance those activities which make the waterfront an active, lively and attractive place, while ensuring that it is also a safe and secure one. This section describes each element in the strategy, amplifying the preceding Action Agenda and Concept Plan map. In some cases, potential areas of responsibility have been identified along with potential funding sources. In other more long-term actions, the participants are as yet unspecified. These actions

will be selected and implemented according to the interests of the Borough Council and other public and private groups and individuals.

It should be stressed that the projects proposed here are still in the "concept stage," and that their final form and location has not yet been determined. In all cases, the borough government and other community interests must make the final decisions as to whether or not to pursue a particular project, and where to locate it. The next section, "Recommendations," sets forth a more specific list of potential actions for these groups to select from. Finally, all programs referred to in this section are profiled in more detail in Section 8 of this report.

Gateways

The "gateway" concept is one that extends borough-wide. It is, simply, the idea that each of the commonly used entrances to Bristol should present a positive statement about the borough and its points of interest--a statement which could be made through signs, plantings, lighting, murals, or the renovation of existing buildings.



There are at least two gateways to the waterfront; one is the main highway entrance to the borough, at Routes 413 and 13--presently a clutter of billboards and traffic congestion. The more immediate entrance is the intersection of Maple Beach Road and Old Rt. 13, where a small sign advertising the Mill St. shopping district now stands. In each area, appropriate signs and plantings would be a key factor in conveying the image of Bristol as a place worth visiting. The signs at Rts. 413 and 13 are leased from Amtrak, and the Bucks County Planning Commission is exploring the possibility of having them replaced by Bristol-related signs or a mural.

An ad hoc subcommittee of the project advisory committee has initiated and pursued this idea, and have identified these and other sites which act as gateways. The next step is to create and implement designs for each site. It is likely that this project could be carried out at relatively low cost through the use of volunteers, contests, and private donations. A local business, corporation, or community

organization could "adopt" each gateway site, taking responsibility for developing and maintaining it. (The topic of signs is discussed in more detail on pg. 31.)

Another potential source of design assistance is the use of university classes in architecture, landscape architecture and urban design. The advantage of this type of class is that the participants, under professional supervision, generate a wide range of ideas, which the "client" (in this case the gateway committee) is free to select from, at little cost to the borough.

The Water Department Shed

This building now stands on Maple Beach Road a short distance from the "gateway" intersection with Old Rt. 13. In its present location the shed--actually a well preserved brick building with a tile roof--could be renovated and used for several purposes; a headquarters for the Otter Creek Marsh Preserve, a visitors' center, and an historical museum are among the uses that have been suggested for it. It also offers a potential link to the former towpath and structural remains of the Delaware Canal,

and could be developed to amplify this theme in Bristol's history. If community groups and the borough government wish to pursue this idea, the building could be renovated, largely through volunteer efforts. Another more long-range alternative would be to consider moving the building to a site in the waterfront park. This action would centralize all waterfront-related information and administrative activities right at the waterfront, where they would be immediately visible and accessible to the visitor. The advantages of such a move must be weighed against its considerable costs.

Otter Creek Marsh Preserve

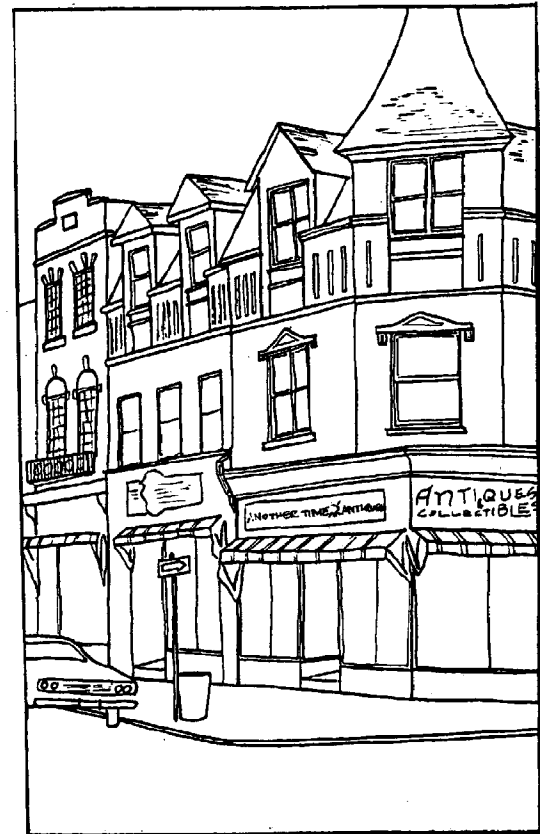
This project, currently in the planning stages, will involve the management of the land area surrounding the marsh (owned by the Borough, The Grundy Foundation, and the Rohm and Haas Corporation) by The Nature Conservancy, for the conservation of the marsh's rare plant communities. Among the planned facilities are nature trails surrounding the marsh, a boardwalk leading out over the marsh to an observation platform, signs and outdoor

displays. A program of clean-up and maintenance involving local volunteers will be developed, as will a series of public walks and other events. Funds for the project are being raised from public and private sources, including the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund and several private foundations and corporations. The marsh preserve can be linked to the waterfront park and the business district through a system of walkways, described on pg. 29 and shown on the concept plan map.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION: Main Street Program

Bristol's downtown is centered on the Mill St. business district, a retail center which has proved remarkably resilient in the face of competition from nearby suburban shopping malls. In order to continue Mill Street's growth, and extend it to neighboring streets, it is necessary to create a distinct identity for the business district by taking advantage of its historic resources and its proximity to the waterfront.

One approach that seems well suited to this need is the Main Street Program. Developed first by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and now

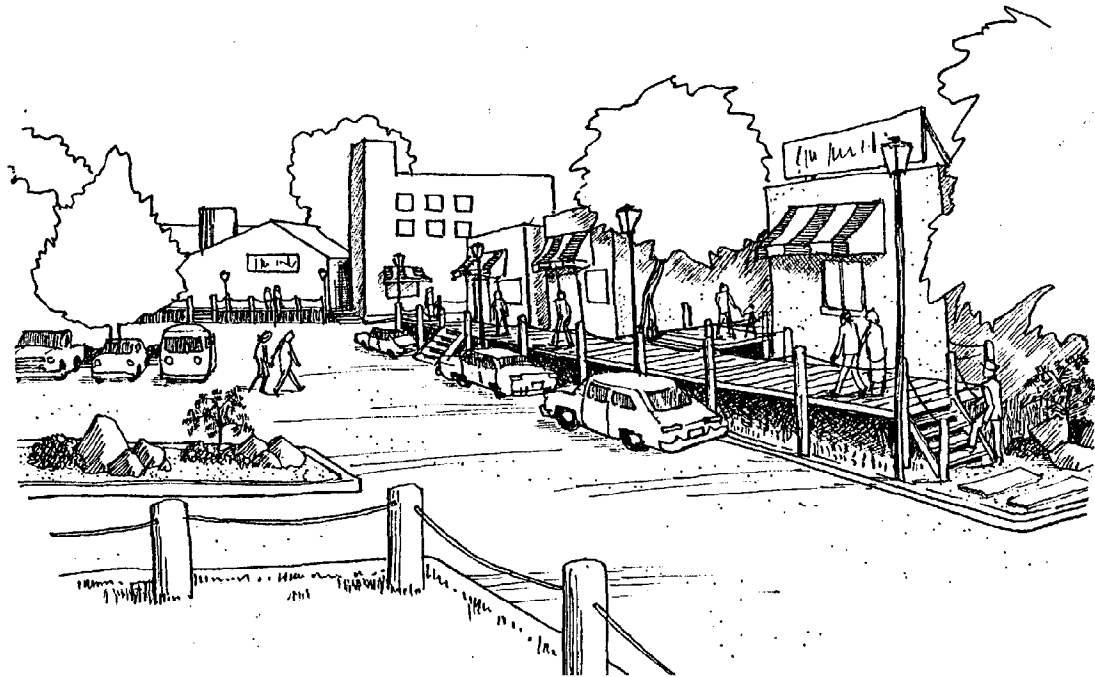


administered in Pennsylvania by the Department of Community Affairs, the program is designed to build a strong public-private partnership for the revitalization of small downtowns. The program is centered on four concepts: organization, design assistance, promotion, and economic restructuring, all carried out under the guidance of a full-time Main Street manager.

Communities are chosen for the Main Street Program based on a combination of factors, including organizational capabilities, the ability to raise private funds, and local government support. A newly created Main Street Committee, including members of the Borough Council and the Mill Street Business Association, is considering the possibility of instituting elements of the program independently, or in advance of a formal application to the Department of Community Affairs. DCA will provide technical assistance with such efforts whether or not a community is accepted into the program.

Back of Mill Street

The south side of Mill St., which fronts on the borough parking lot, presents



opportunities for improving the appearance of the business district. Opening retail stores to the parking lot by means of windows, entrances, banners or signs, would increase their accessibility and visibility, and help to draw visitors from the waterfront to Mill St. One comprehensive approach would be the construction of a walkway on the existing sidewalk between stores and parking lot. Combined with changes in traffic flow through the lot, this action would encourage

pedestrian shopping and discourage use of the lot as a main thoroughfare. The few small alleys which now lead from Mill St. to the parking lot could also function as walkways if attractively planted and marked with signs, and would help to direct foot traffic up to Mill St. Implementation of this idea depends in part on finding a solution to current flooding problems on this side of Mill St. The exact cause of these problems is unclear, and must be studied further before solutions can be proposed.

SHORELINE IMPROVEMENTS:

Bulkhead

The construction of a bulkhead and walkway within the area between the boat ramp and the bank parking lot is a key element in the waterfront strategy, and one which most advisory committee members considered a high priority action. A properly designed bulkhead can function as a walkway, a fishing platform, and a place to sit and watch the boat traffic. It would enable the visitor to get close to the river's edge without having to climb over rocks; more importantly, it would extend, stabilize, and define the edge, curbing the problem of shoreline erosion.

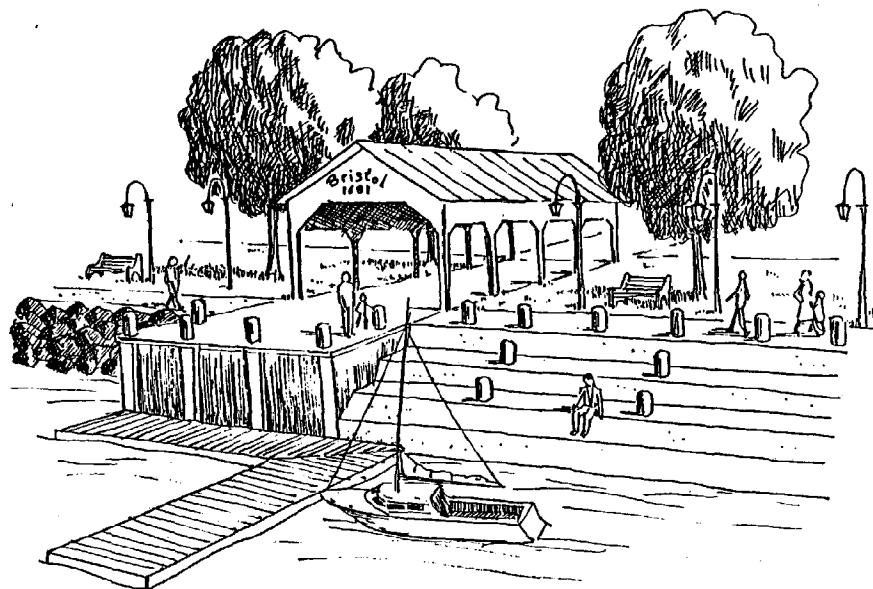
As shown on the Concept Plan map, the bulkhead would be limited to the northern area of the waterfront in order to create a diversity of shoreline environments, from the "formal" straight edge to the more "natural" rocky shoreline. In addition, the cost factor would make it difficult to extend the bulkhead over a larger area. Many bulkhead designs are possible, including some that provide several levels or steps down to the river. The final design and location of a bulkhead will depend on the availability of funds, further

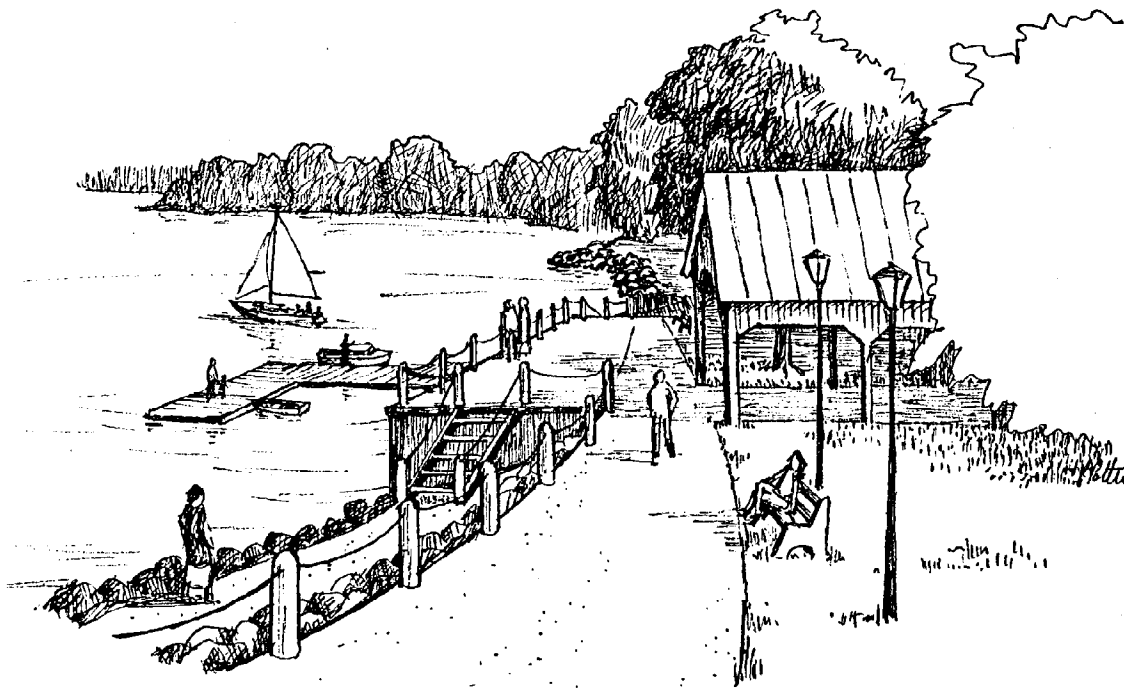
community input, and permit requirements.

Riprap

Most of the present shoreline is composed of riprap, or rock facing, which consists of large stones, placed somewhat at random, with erosion occurring behind them. This riprap should be replenished and improved in order to stem this erosion and make the water's edge more attractive and

accessible. As the bulkhead is constructed, stones from that part of the shoreline could be added to the existing riprap; it might also be possible to obtain additional, smaller stones to fill gaps. This is one task that necessitates heavy equipment; it might be possible to accomplish it as part of the proposed Lion's Park improvements, discussed in this section under Waterfront Parks.





Both the bulkhead and improvements to the riprap have been proposed as part of an application to the Pennsylvania Recreational Improvement and Rehabilitation Act program (RIRA), administered by the Department of Community Affairs. Projects funded through RIRA must function to improve both recreational and economic opportunities; both goals are clearly realizable through a project of this

type. This project could also be eligible for funding through the Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management Program in the next few years, as funds from that program become available

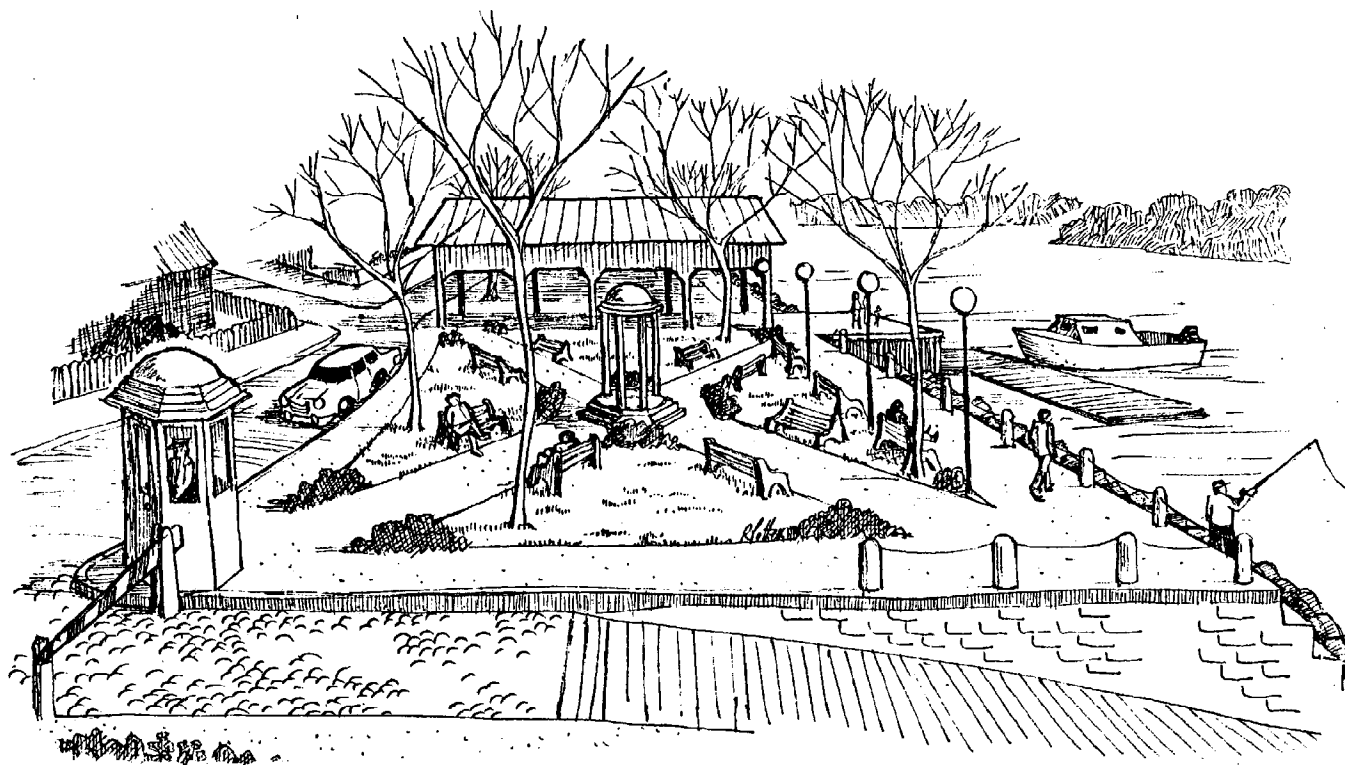
Floating Dock

A floating dock on the waterfront would serve two purposes: enabling users of the boat ramp to load their passengers and cargo, and

enabling visitors to tie their boats up and visit Mill Street, the waterfront parks, and other attractions. A dock of this type is a seasonal facility, removed and stored each winter; it can also be moved from one mooring to another. Two locations have been proposed for a dock: parallel to the proposed bulkhead or parallel to the existing boat ramp. The bulkhead location might appeal more to visiting boaters, and would provide an interesting view from the bulkhead; the ramp location would appeal to users of the ramp (who could use the dock to load passengers and cargo) and would preserve an open view of the river from the bulkhead. This project could be funded as part of a second phase of the RIRA program, through other programs such as the Water Facilities Loan Board or the CZM program, or through private initiatives.

Fishing Access

Although fishing is an activity which can take place anywhere on the shoreline, some areas offer better opportunities than others, and should be improved accordingly. The mouth of the Otter Creek marsh (a spawning area for fish) offers one such



opportunity. The borough should consider establishing a fishing access point, with seating, railings, and possibly a small shelter at this site. In the long run the possibility of a fishing pier extending into mouth of the creek should be considered. A pier would provide safe fishing access to a wide variety of people (ie. older persons or handicapped individuals who might find it difficult to reach the present rocky shoreline), would act as part of the waterfront walkway

system, and could be used for commercial functions as well (for example, sales of refreshments or rental of fishing equipment).

Boat Ramp Guard House

The borough boat ramp, built originally by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission, is a center of waterfront activity and the subject of some controversy. Some residents feel that the boat ramp should be removed because it is in poor repair and could be a hazard to its users. Others feel that it is

an essential facility for borough residents as well as outsiders, and should be improved and used to generate income, to pay for its own maintenance, and to increase security on the waterfront.

This report recommends the latter approach. A small guardhouse could be established both to collect fees for use of the ramp and an information center, offering maps of historic walking tours, the nature preserve and the business district.

Furthermore, a guard at the boat ramp would provide "eyes on the waterfront,"--a way of curbing unlawful activities such as drinking, thereby improving law enforcement and security.

Improvements to the boat ramp could be made available by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. Funds for such facilities are provided by the federal government through the Dingell-Johnson Act, but are dispensed by the Fish Commission. Given the problems with this facility in the past, future improvements are likely to occur only as a result of a direct request to the Fish Commission from the borough government, accompanied by a firm commitment to maintain the boat ramp and improve the surrounding area. Funds could also be requested from the CZM program.

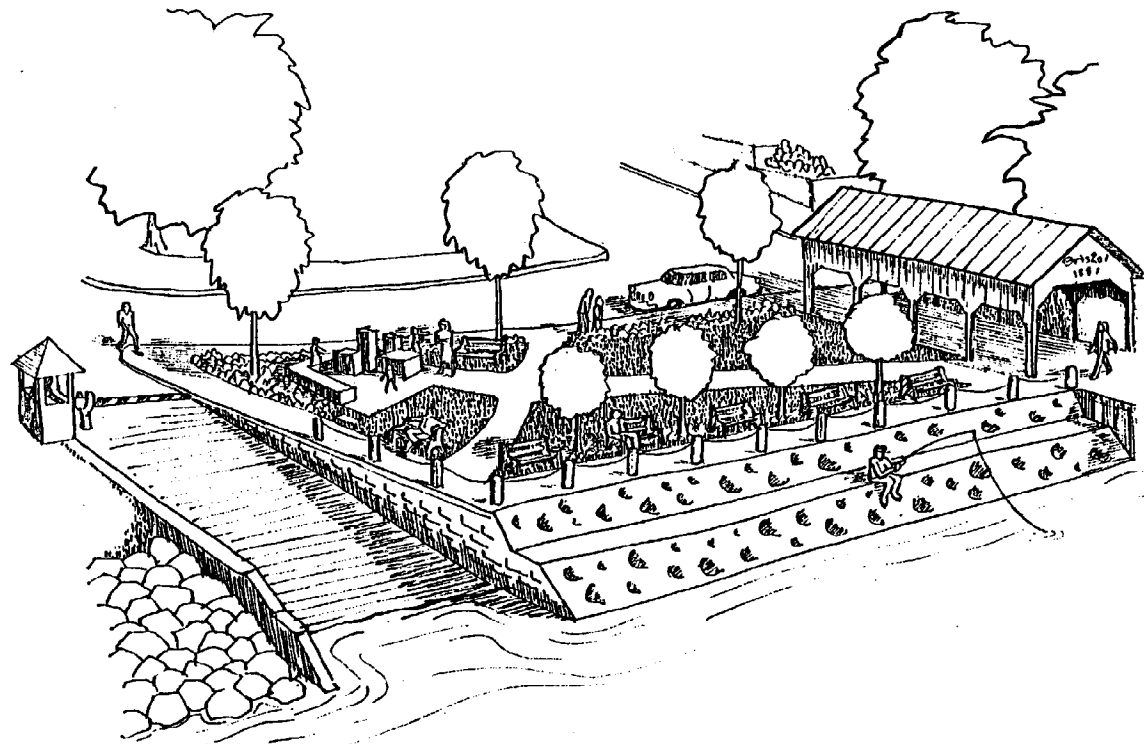
WATERFRONT PARKS:

Lions Park Extension

The Lion's Club, which built and maintains the existing Lions Park, has made plans to extend this park area to encompass the municipally-owned land extending to the edge of the parking lot. This site offers opportunities for a wider variety of activities for park visitors. The design

concept proposed here involves a central area which would function as an informal children's play area and a site for small events--musical performances, children's theater, walking tour lectures--which would be inappropriate to the more formal gazebo in the adjoining park. Lighting, seating and

plantings would center on this area. One purpose of this design is to give families with small children a central place to congregate on the waterfront. Assistance with the design of this area is being provided by the National Park Service; construction will be carried out by the Lion's Club.



Extended Municipal Park Area

Beyond the "enlarged" Lions Park is an area of municipally owned parkland extending to the edge of the Otter Creek marsh. This area currently receives little use, due perhaps to its proximity to the parking lot. As shown on the concept plan map, it is suggested that this park be extended into the parking lot on a line with Samuel Clift Street. This would accomplish two ends: it would remove parking directly on the waterfront (a practice which blocks others' view of the river, and is often accompanied by drinking) and it would provide enough open space for the proposed boat ramp guardhouse and other activities. One of the activities suggested for this area is picnicking; another is the fishing access area described above. The area would also be suitable for an information center--either the water department shed mentioned above, or a smaller, seasonal facility such as the proposed guardhouse.

A more detailed design for this area will need to be developed based on further input from community residents. Such a design could

also be an area of potential assistance from a landscape architecture or urban design class (see Gateways section above). Funding could be pursued through such programs as the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which assists local governments in the development of outdoor recreation facilities.

Parking Lot

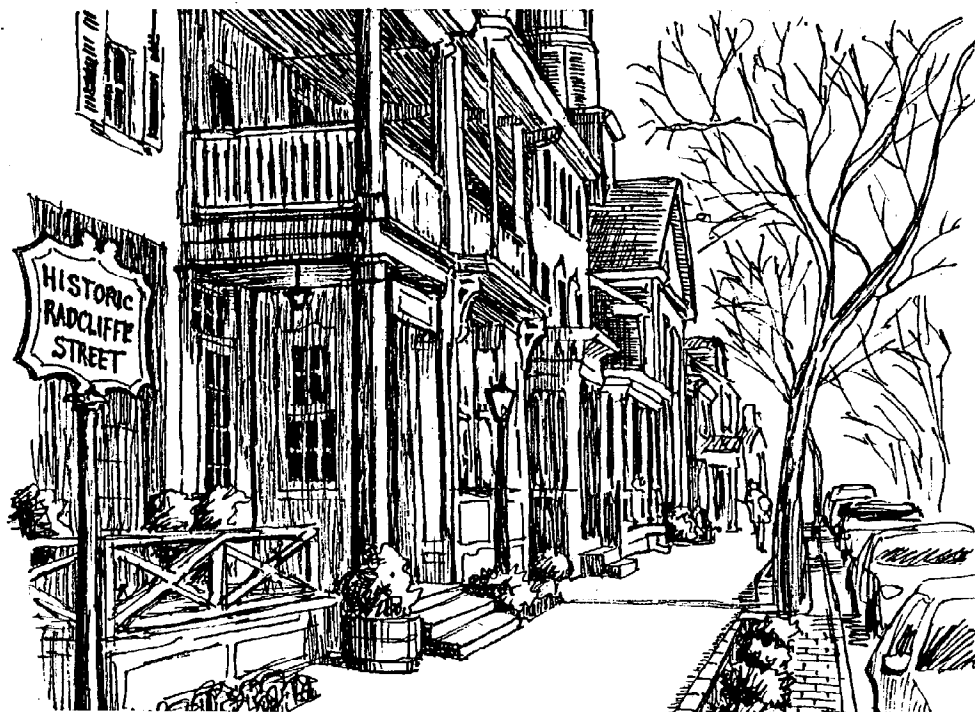
The municipal lot would be slightly reduced in size through the extension of the park area mentioned above. Other improvements in the parking lot could include planting of shrubs in addition to the existing trees. Planters could be placed so as to slow down the flow of traffic, and discourage heavy use of the parking lot roadway. It might be possible to include parking lot improvements in a design scheme for the municipal park area. Correction of flooding problems could be addressed simultaneously.

Walkways

Walkways are an integral element of each part of the waterfront, and play the key role of linking these separate parts. As shown in the concept plan map, a waterfront walkway could be integrated into the design of the

bulkhead, and follow the shoreline from the wharf to the edge of the Otter Creek marsh, where it would join a nature trail that would border the marsh. Another potential link exists between the waterfront walkway and a walkway between the rear of Mill St. and the parking lot (mentioned above). The few small alleys which now lead from Mill St. to the parking lot could also function as walkways if attractively planted and marked with signs, and would help to direct foot traffic up to Mill St. Other streets in the business district could be included in this system through a shoppers' brochure with a map and listing of stores.

The north end of the waterfront walkway could connect with Radcliffe Street and its historic district. In this area a system of signs or markers on the street itself could be used for a self-guided tour of the historic district, extending as far as the Grundy Library, with its open lawns and views of the river, which would provide a convenient stopping place. Each type of walkway--waterfront, nature trail, Mill St. and historic district--would



be distinguished by different paving materials, signs and other design elements, but when combined, would give the visitor an extensive system of paths between Bristol's natural, commercial, and historic attractions.

Each type of walkway could be planned and implemented independently of the others, although common design elements would be shared among them. For example, the "historic district walkway" on

Radcliffe St. could be implemented simply through signs and a brochure. The waterfront walkway could be integrated into the design of the bulkhead, the Lion's Park and the municipal park extension, while nature trails are clearly a part of the marsh preserve. In this way the borough's organizations, private businesses, and other interests could take the responsibility for implementing small pieces of a larger whole.

Overlook Parks

The shoreline between the central waterfront and the Grundy Library, while mainly private property, does contain several small lots which offer access to the river. One of these is a vacant lot at the foot of Mulberry Street, another is a portion of the Water Department property. Both sites have the potential for development as "vest-pocket parks," --simple designs with steps leading down the hill to a seating area. Such parks would be pleasant way stations on a tour of the historic district, and would also give nearby residents access to a quiet waterfront setting of their own. Small parks of this type could also be designed to carry out some of Bristol's historical themes, through use of traditional plantings or possibly a small exhibit on the borough's history. Projects of this type would be well-suited to community groups willing to help design and maintain such sites.

Access to Burlington Island

This island now presents a forested, almost undeveloped shoreline to Bristol, although in the past it was used extensively for recreation. Since the island is located



across the state line, within the City of Burlington, future plans for the island must of course lie with that city. However, any assistance from Bristol, in the form of planning for joint events, could help to renew the historic relationship between the two communities, and open up new recreational opportunities for Bristol's residents.

Signs

Signs are an essential element for directing and informing visitors, and can create a sense of continuity between the different areas of the waterfront and the business district. Two different types of signs should be used: directional signs which lead visitors to facilities, and interpretive signs that

explain the significance of an area. Although signs in different areas might differ in design or purpose, continuity among them could be established by means of a logo, color, or other design element. A logo contest is one way of generating a multitude of ideas, and of involving area schools and businesses in the design process.

Maintenance

A key component of every element in the waterfront strategy is the assurance of adequate maintenance. Clearly, this responsibility must rest primarily with the borough government and its maintenance staff. However, the design of each element (walkways, park plantings, etc.) should emphasize the use of low-maintenance materials and plantings. A maintenance committee could also be of great assistance to the borough in developing adequate maintenance plans. It could review the maintenance of existing sites and call attention to problems. It could review the design of new facilities and develop plans for their maintenance (ie. what type of maintenance is required, and how often). Finally, a committee could

play a key role in organizing volunteer efforts--for example, an annual clean-up day.

Security

Of all the issues identified by borough residents, security was one of the most important. The first prerequisite for improved security is a more visible police presence on the waterfront, through increased patrols and enforcement of existing regulations. Another key element is improved lighting which is directed at walkways and seating areas; this can be integrated with the design of other projects such as improvements to existing parks and the shoreline. All designs for such projects should also give consideration to security. For example, design of play areas so that they can be readily observed by adults, or provision for increased commercial facilities near recreational ones, are ways to create a climate of safety. The key point is that use creates security -- the more people use the waterfront, and the more events and facilities are established to attract them there, the safer it will become.

Publicity

In order to enhance Bristol's economic and recreational potential it is necessary to attract visitors. However, the borough's attractions are presently little known even in the greater Philadelphia area. A publicity committee could help to address this problem by working to improve borough advertising--through signs, distribution of a brochure (such as the one being prepared by the Grundy Foundation), announcements of borough events, and sponsorship of activities such as the logo contest mentioned above. Improving publicity is closely tied to the rest of the waterfront strategy, since an exciting waterfront can become Bristol's best advertisement for attracting new visitors, residents, businesses and corporations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section describes the revitalization strategy in terms of specific areas of leadership and responsibility. It identifies the borough government and the other organizations active in the community and describes the actions they could be involved in.

Borough Council and Government

- o Coordinate the development of an integrated waterfront design, including bulkhead, improved riprap, a waterfront walkway and a floating boat dock, through an application to the Pennsylvania Recreational Improvement and Rehabilitation Act (RIRA) Program, and other funding sources.
- o Coordinate the design and development of the municipal park area through an application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- o Develop a strategy for improved waterfront security through policing, lighting and safety-enhancing design elements.
- o Pursue the survey of potential historic districts in the borough for nomination to the National

Register of Historic Places, in cooperation with the Radcliffe Cultural and Historical Foundation.

- o Encourage the Council's "Main Street" Committee to work with the Mill Street Business Association in pursuit of a Main Street Program.
- o Consider renting certain borough-owned properties to businesses which will enhance waterfront economic revitalization, earmarking some of the income for maintenance of waterfront facilities.
- o Consider allowing the use of its property at street ends along the riverfront for development of small river overlook parks and fishing sites.
- o Request that the Pennsylvania Fish Commission redesign and reconstruct the boat ramp with the assurance that the borough will maintain the ramp in the future. Consider seeking Coastal Zone Management funds as well, to cover initial costs.

- o Build a guardhouse near the boat ramp site and collect fees for launching. The fees could be used for maintaining the ramp and for a guard's salary.
- o Consider arranging for a design student from a local college to work for the borough through the Pennsylvania College Work-Study Program, to assist in gateway and park design.
- o Establish volunteer committees to monitor and participate in revitalization efforts in the following areas: maintenance of project sites, borough publicity, and waterfront events.
- o Consider new uses of the Water Department shed, such as a Marsh Preserve administrative headquarters, an information center or an historical museum.
- o Engage in efforts to renew historic linkages with Burlington, N.J. through co-sponsorship of events.



Borough Planning Commission

- o Consider adoption of the waterfront concept plan as part of the Borough Comprehensive Plan (currently being updated).
- o Consider alternatives for improved plantings, lighting and traffic flow in the main borough parking lot.

- o Evaluate feasibility of complete or partial closing of Samuel Clift Street, with attendant design considerations.

Grundy Foundation

- o Renovate the Bristol Theater for use as a center for the performing arts, cinema and for community activities. Design the theater to provide access to the waterfront.
- o Continue to participate in the coordination and leadership of borough-wide revitalization efforts.
- o Donate appropriate adjacent land to the borough as part of the Marsh Preserve project.

Radcliffe Cultural and Historical Foundation

- o Continue to assist the Borough Council with coordination of an historic district survey, and with application to the state Certified Local Government Program.

- o Develop an historic walkway for the Radcliffe Street area, consisting of a self-guiding brochure and sign system.
- o Coordinate development of one of the proposed overlook parks on Radcliffe Street, by seeking design assistance, funds and volunteer help.
- o Advise the Mill Street Business Association and other private interests on the history and context of historic buildings, as an aid in their restoration.
- o Work with other community interests on the design of other elements of the waterfront.

Mill Street Business Association

- o Pursue an application to the Pennsylvania Main Street Program as a means of coordinating and increasing downtown revitalization efforts. Work with the Borough Council to develop this application.
- o Investigate the potential of alternative financing methods for downtown

improvements, with assistance from the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.

- o Work to develop new commercial opportunities on Market Street, Mill Street, and Samuel Clift Street.
- o Participate in borough committees (such as the proposed maintenance and waterfront events committees).
- o Consider sponsoring promotional events such as boat shows, which use the resources of the waterfront, such as boat shows.

Banks and Corporations

- o Consider providing low-interest loans to downtown businesses and developers of residential property for the restoration of historic buildings.
- o Consider donation of land or easements along the waterfront for public open space, walkways and/or plantings.
- o Consider contributions to the private matching funds required for application to the RIRA program.

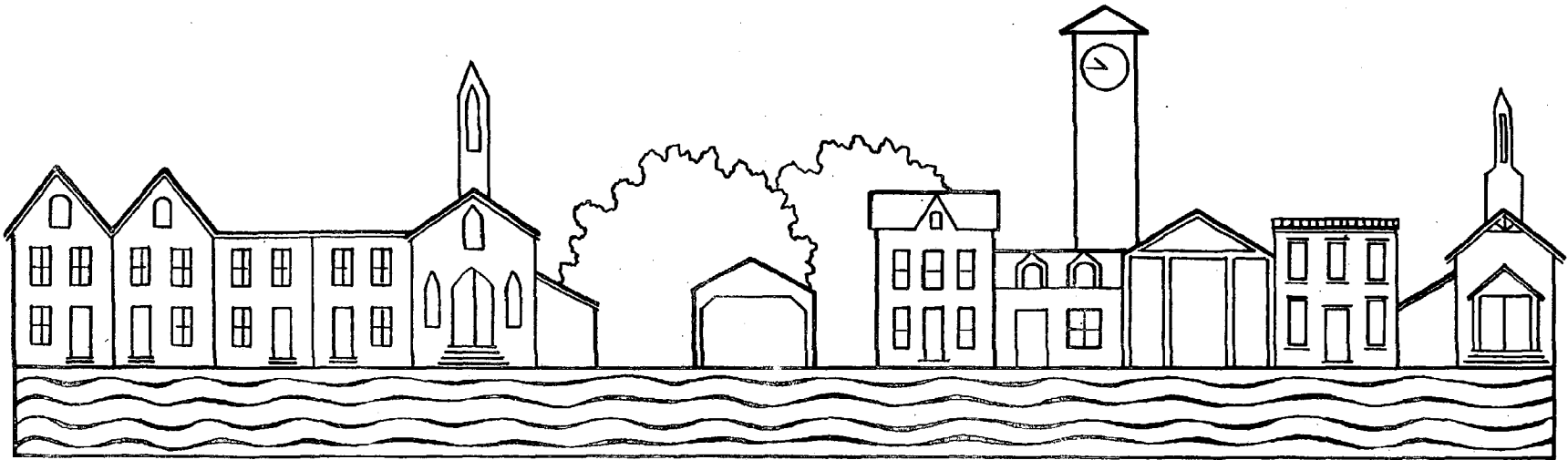
Lion's Club

- o Pursue the plan to enlarge Lion's Park and seek design assistance for the park.
- o Develop a fund-raising strategy consisting of private donations and special events.
- o Participate in the proposed Waterfront Events Committee.
- o Encourage the increased recreational use of the park through improved security and maintenance and new park activities and events, scheduled at different times of the day and night.

- o Participate in the development of the historic and waterfront walkway system.

Gateway Committee

- o Seek endorsement and support of the Borough Council.
- o Develop design ideas for signs, including a logo contest.
- o Seek design assistance for signs and sites.
- o Involve other organizations, businesses and property owners in the construction and maintenance of gateway sites.



PROGRAM REVIEW

The study team evaluated a wide range of potential sources of funding and assistance as part of the development of the waterfront strategy. Those programs which are particularly relevant to proposed projects are briefly described in this section. For current information as to deadlines and levels of funding, readers should contact the administering agencies listed for each program.

FEDERAL AID IN FISH RESTORATION (DINGELL-JOHNSON ACT)

- Administered by:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Fish Commission.
- Objectives:** To provide federal financial aid for state projects designed to restore, conserve, and manage sport fish, and to provide for public use and benefits from these resources.
- Type of Assistance:** The Dingell-Johnson Act provides financial aid to states for fish restoration and management projects. The state must provide a 25 percent match for all projects using federal Dingell-Johnson funds.
- Eligibility:** Dingell-Johnson funds are dispensed by the States on a priority basis and can only be used for projects related to sport fishing. Communities may find this program could benefit them for such things as piers, boat ramps, and launching sites.
- In 1985, Pennsylvania received about \$900,000 in federal aid under the Dingell-Johnson Act. Funding has been based on an excise tax on fishing equipment and gear. Congress has amended the Act to broaden the fishing equipment tax and to earmark a portion of the federal motor boat fuels tax to the Dingell-Johnson program. This should result in a sharp increase in each state's allocation.

The recent amendments also require that at least 10 percent of each state's Dingell-Johnson funds be expended for increased public access, such as the construction of piers, launching sites, boat ramps, and related parking areas. The state may also allocate up to 10 percent of its funds for aquatic resources education programs.

Contact: Glenn Reed
Federal Aid Coordinator
Pennsylvania Fish Commission
Box 8
Elm, PA 17521
(717) 657-4531

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND
(P.L. 95-625 of 1965 amended 1978)

Administered by: National Park Service and Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

Objective: To assist state and local governments in planning, acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation facilities.

Type of Assistance: 50% matching grant for acquisition or development of recreation sites.

Eligibility: Local government must provide funds or in-kind services to cover 50% match. Projects are evaluated by DCA based on their consistency with the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan SCORP). State must submit a listing of proposed projects for approval by NPS. Eligible types of projects include local government acquisition and development of recreational resources and facilities. Also surveys, planning studies, data collection and analysis, public participation efforts and other activities required to sustain the SCORP process are eligible.

PENNSYLVANIA MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Administered by: Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs

Objectives: To create a public-private partnership for revitalization of small downtowns. Program is modeled after the successful National Trust for Historic Preservation program, which relies on a four point approach: organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring.

Type of Assistance: Main Street towns are selected for a three year phased grant, in which DCA provides \$25,000 the first year, \$12,500 the second, and \$6,250 the third year. (Towns must provide the matching funds in the second and third years.) Funding pays for a full-time Main Street manager who organizes and coordinates the effort. Matching grants of up to \$10,000 are also available for design and architectural services for downtown buildings; these grants must be matched dollar-for-dollar with private or local funds.

Eligibility: A community must demonstrate proven management capacity, have a private sector downtown organization already in place, and must have local government support.

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Chief, Community Development Division
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505 Forum Bldg.
Harrisburg, PA 17120

(717) 787-7156

Donald G. Schlosser
Consultant, Municipal Consulting Services Division
Department of Community Affairs
P.O. Box 155
Harrisburg, PA 17108-0155

(717) 787-7173

RECREATION IMPROVEMENT ACT (RIRA)
(Act 1984-106 (S.B. 1434, P.N. 2193))

- Administered by:** Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.
- Objective:** To stimulate and support economic development and conservation initiatives by local government, and to create more neighborhood recreation opportunities.
- Type of Assistance:** Recreation grants for municipalities, of which 50% is appropriated for rehabilitation, studies and development projects, 25% for acquisition of land for recreation, parks, and open space, and 25% for community centers. Any project up to \$10,000 can be eligible for up to 100% of material costs. There is a \$200,000 dollar limitation per project, per fiscal year.
- Eligibility:** To receive a grant the proposed project must include the following:
- a) public land.
 - b) a low income area.
 - c) promotion of economic development.
 - d) at least 50% private matching funds.
 - e) commitment of other resources.
 - f) description of extent to which the project complements community conservation efforts.
 - g) identification of existing deficiencies in recreation opportunities.
- Contact:** Larry Williamson
Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
Department of Community Affairs
P.O. Box 155
Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717) 787-7672

WATER FACILITIES BOARD

(Act 1982-107 (H.B. 2362, P.N. 577))

Administered by: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources,
and Department of Transportation

Objective: To assist communities in redevelopment of port and
other water facilities.

Type of Assistance: Loans covering 100% of projects up to 500,000 and
50% of projects costing more.

Eligibility: Applicants must be a port actively engaged in
interstate commerce. (Bristol is considered part of
the "Philadelphia Port," which runs from Morrisville
- Trenton to the Delaware border).

The following information is required to demonstrate
eligibility:

- a) a description, plan and cost estimate for
the project.
- b) description of how the project will improve
public health, safety or economic
well-being.
- c) whether the project will solve water
facilities problems.
- d) cost-effectiveness of project.
- e) consistency with state water plan, local
comprehensive plans, and other relevant
documents.

Contact: Mr. Dennis Capella
Executive Director, Water Facilities Loan Board
Department of Environmental Resources
P.O. Box 2357
Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717) 787-8137

CONCLUSION

Bristol's riverfront is a special place, both because of its particular opportunities and because of the way these opportunities interrelate. It is here that cultural, economic, recreational and natural resources converge. The river and the waterfront are the origin of the special character of Bristol. The area's resources complement and enhance one another. They could be made readily accessible to the resident and visitor alike, and could offer a unique and multifaceted waterfront experience.

A number of organizations are active in Bristol: the Radcliffe Cultural and Historical Foundation, the Grundy Foundation, the Mill Street Business Association, the Lion's Club, the Exchange Club and others. All of these groups have their own interests and projects. But, when viewed together, each project plays a part in the wider effort to enhance the borough as a whole.

The National Park Service has been invited into Bristol to act as a catalyst for action in the borough's growing revitalization movement.

Information sharing, coordination among various interests, stimulation of public involvement and concept planning have been the separate elements of this project. The results are a riverfront strategy, an action agenda, a concept plan and a set of recommendations.

The revitalization strategy is the thread which ties together many diverse perspectives and separate initiatives into a unified effort. The action agenda portrays the range of actions and indicates who can be responsible for carrying them out. It also briefly describes how the actions might be implemented and when. The intention of the agenda is to concisely outline the components of the work to be done.

The concept plan spatially represents the action agenda on a map of the waterfront area. It acts as a step in the visualization of the strategy, indicating where the ideas presented in the action agenda might be implemented and how they relate to one another.

The recommendations are the final stage in the overall strategy, and present a

specific list of tasks to those who will assume responsibility and leadership.

Realization of a strategy such as this depends on the endorsement, support and ongoing participation of the community as a whole. Many individuals and groups have expressed interest in and commitment to the ideas which have been generated throughout this project and are presented here. There are many more opportunities for people to become involved in realizing these ideas--in fact, the projections made in this report depend on such involvement.

As a result of cooperation, participation and persistence, many positive changes can occur. The borough's image and civic pride can be renewed, its economic vitality enhanced, its natural and historic resources conserved and its recreational and tourism opportunities developed. Active participation by concerned citizens and their elected officials is the key factor that can bring about these changes.

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